

ON COAST DEFENSE

Conditions of Coast Defenses Useless for War.

COMPETENT MEN ARE SCARCE

The National Board Will Recommend the Construction of Coast Defenses For the Columbia River Costing Over One Million.

WASHINGTON, D. C. Dec. 8.—One of the most important subjects treated by President Roosevelt in his message to Congress was the deplorable condition of our coast defenses. Deplorable, not so much through the lack of fortifications, guns or machinery, although much remains to be done on all but three, especially because of the lack of men necessary to keep the guns and machinery in order in time of peace, to say nothing of manipulating them should war break out. What the President did not have to say on this subject was short but to the point and he took a firm stand in favor of legislation calculated to remedy existing conditions. He has already placed himself squarely on record, and only six months ago addressed a special letter to the Senate in which he pointed out that the increasing importance and wealth of our ports offered more inducement to an enemy. "The fact that we now have a navy does not in any wise diminish the importance of coast defenses; on the contrary it emphasizes their value, and the necessity for their construction," he said recently. "It is an accepted naval maxim that a navy can be used to strategic advantage only when acting on the offensive and it can be free to so operate only after our coast defense is reasonably secure and so recognized by the country."

The President takes the ground that the security and protection of our interests require the completion of our coast defenses, and that the plans of the National Coast Defense Board should receive the generous support of Congress.

In his message the President reaffirmed his position, especially as far as pending legislation providing for the reorganization of the coast artillery is concerned. The Senate Committee on military affairs has favorably reported a bill to separate the Field Artillery from the Coast Artillery, on the ground that they are two distinct branches of the service. The

bill provides for the gradual increase during five years of 296 officers and 5,043 men for the coast artillery and 558 for the field artillery. The great trouble of the coast artillery has been to secure and keep trained electricians, engineers and firemen. It will surprise many to know that most of the cost of fortifications is for electrical machinery, "fire control," and search lights, the "fire control" being the system of telegraphic and telephonic communication between forts and batteries, and with observing stations.

A private statement of the condition of the coast defenses of twenty-eight fortified ports shows that to man them with one shift of officers and men, that is to say, each man at his proper station, would require 40,675 men and 1,834 officers. There are today available at the different forts 10,713 men and 357 officers, scarcely enough to keep the guns and machinery from rusting!

Commercial interests in general, and especially those concerned with shipping and terminals at our great ports will be interested in this matter, if they take the trouble to investigate the facts. Take New York for instance, with Forts Totten, Schuyler, Stocum, Wadsworth, Hamilton and Hancock, equipped with big guns, torpedoes, search lights, etc. It would require 234 officers and 5,682 men to man these forts alone, without providing for any relief whatever. That is more than two thirds of all the officers and half of all the men now engaged in taking care of all the coast defenses of the entire United States.

Other cities present interesting statistics. There is San Francisco, the terminal of the Harriman and other great transcontinental lines, and from which the ships of the Pacific Mail and other trans-Pacific lines carry our goods to the orient; in many respects the key to Hawaii, Guam and the Philippines. To defend San Francisco are Forts Foster, Miley, Barry, Baker, Mason, Winfield Scott and McDowell. To man these would require 175 officers and 4,268 men. There are available 42 officers and 1490 men. The coast defense plans call for the expenditure of \$3,119,242 to complete the defenses of San Francisco, of which \$439,600 is to be spent for guns, emplacements and carriages; \$459,955 for submarine mine defenses; \$234,952 for a central power plant; \$192,064 for a reserve power plant; \$198,000 for search lights; \$19,600 for modernizing older emplacements, and \$1,473,991 for "fire control."

It will cost \$1,473,991 to install a complete system of communication alone at San Francisco, and it is a significant fact that this firecontrol installation will be the only one recommended to Congress this year, because there are no men available to care for others if they should be installed, and in passing

it may be remarked that for Fort Mason and McDowell at San Francisco there are no men available at all.

Astoria is another place on the Pacific coast of importance. Forts Columbia, Stevens and Canby defend Columbia River. It would require 67 officers and 1,446 men to properly man these defenses. Ten officers and 246 men are available. The National Board estimates that \$1,041,382 is necessary to complete these defenses but there is no prospect at present of Congress being ever asked to appropriate a dollar for this purpose, so long as ten officers and 240 men do the work of 67 officers and 1,446 men, and enlisted men at \$13 to \$18 a month will find positions as engineers, firemen, master gunners, electricians, observers, gun pointers, etc. Seattle, Tacoma and Olympia Washington, are important cities on the Pacific coast. How are they provided with coast defenses? Puget Sound is defended by Forts Worden, Casey and Flagler. These forts are manned by the magnificent equipment of 27 officers and 902 men, where 129 officers and 3,189 men are now required! Even at that there is only one officer to 22 men where the proportion should be one officer to twenty four men.

FOUND FINE BUNCH.

Bill Henkel Shakes Hands With John D. Rockefeller.

NEW YORK, Dec. 7.—Breezy Bill Henkel, United States marshal, has grasped the tentacles of the oil octopus and likes the memory of the sensation. As Bill put it himself, he shook hands with John D. Rockefeller, Henry M. Flagler, and others while serving them with subpoenas to appear as witnesses in the Standard Oil cases in Missouri and "never found a finer bunch of gentlemen in his life."

"Naturally," said the marshal, "I expected to have some trouble after reading about the times they had trying to serve John D. last summer. But, say, it really was a cinch—the softest thing I ever struck in my life. I felt almost ashamed that I hadn't a silver salver to put the subpoena on when I went up to John D.'s house, after I had called him up by phone and told him Uncle Sam had a little business with him. He set the hour and minute he would see me, and told me to come up myself."

"I began to think somebody surely had been lying about the old gentleman, his manners were so fine. In fact, I was a bit embarrassed when he began talking about the weather. I began to spar for an opening and he gave me a chance to get in. He took the paper and said he was much obliged to me and regretted that he had given me the trouble of coming all the way up town. Then he shook my hand, bowed to me and I bowed back.

He also smiled a few more times and then I left him with the paper in his hand."

SHEEP SLAUGHTERED.

PENDELTON, Or., Dec. 7.—By the collision of the two parts of a switching freight train, 119 sheep were killed in the Pendleton yards this morning. One car of merchandise and two of sheep were demolished. The sheep were from Twin Falls, Idaho, consigned to the Portland stockyards. No other damage was done.

TRIAL MARRIAGES ARE NOT NOVEL.

(Continued from Page 9.)

bands only by death. Among the Karens separations save by death are rare. The Zulus and Natalian Kafirs generally marry for life.

In the Ardaman islands it is said that separation of husband and wife is permitted for no cause whatever, and the same is true of certain Papuans and other tribes of the Indian Archipelago, which retain ancient customs. Death alone separates the Veddahs of Ceylon. But as a general rule there are comparatively few peoples among whom separation of husband and wife is not practiced to some extent, or where the marriage probation idea is not found in some phase of its development.

The Burmese Tartars are devotees of the trial-marriage idea, which has been their custom for centuries. Among the Heh Miaos, one of the Burmese Tartar tribes, the great feast of the first day of spring is made the day of wooing and selection. The townspeople gathered upon a high hill, where the day is spent in feasting, drinking and listening to love songs. As dusk approaches the wooer offers his ox-horn, which he has used for drinking purposes during the feast, to the maiden of his choice as a signal that "Barkis is willin." If his suit is agreeable, and she accepts, she gives him in return her drinking horn as a sign of betrothal. The wedding of the various couples takes place on the night of the feast, but if no child is born within a year the marriage is declared off. But it is the man who gets the worst of this failure on probation. He is debarred from further matrimonial experiments and becomes an object of public charity, can never hold a tribal office, and is held in contempt by the villagers. The only redeeming circumstance is that this matrimonial castaway is never more required to work. It is the only silver lining to his cloud. A somewhat similar probation trial is said to have been the custom among the ancient Irish.

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